

Serial No. 10/608,002

Attorney Docket No. 11-168

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the careful consideration provided in the final office action mailed December 14, 2008. By this submission under 37 C.F.R. §1.114, claims 1-72 are canceled, while claims 73-92 are newly presented. Support for the new independent claims is found in the specification as follows:

claims 73, 82, and 83: page 9, line 25 – page 10, line 2, page 10, lines 13-17, page 12, lines 22 – page 13 lines 4, page 15, lines 19-24, Fig. 4

claim 90: page 13, line 24 – page 14, line 1, page 19, line 2 – page 25, line 11, page 29, line 8 – page 30, line 22

The new claims, including the dependent claims, are believed to present previously claimed material using perhaps different language. No new matter is believed to have been added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the newly presented claims and the following discussion.

Objection to the Drawings

The drawings stand objected as not showing every feature specified in the claims. Specifically, the action states that a camera, plurality of cameras, a microphone, and a plurality of directional microphones must be shown or the features canceled from the claim. Applicants have canceled several claims related to this objection, and Applicants respectfully submit that the objection is now moot. There are no pending claims reciting such features, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to the drawings.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-57 stand objected to because of informalities. Applicants have carefully reviewed and revised the new claims, taking into consideration the objections and rejections made by the Examiner. Applicants assert that the objections are moot in view of the claims cancellation and in view of the newly presented claims. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the claim objections.

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Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §112(1)

Claims 1, 3, 6-7, 9, 11-13, 19-27, 31-32, 34-44, 46, and 48-69 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicants respectfully requests that these rejections be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Applicants' cancellation of claims 1-72 have rendered the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112(1) of claims 1, 34, 39, 49, 56-59, 65 and their corresponding dependent claims as moot. The Applicants however address the rejection as it relates to canceled claim 19. The action states that the specification makes no mention of phrase or word indexing based on a degree of difficulty, and fails to mention any type of indexing scheme or process. Applicants present in new claim 77 features reciting (in summary) that words are stored that have an indication of a degree of difficulty, and that the selection unit selects words for answering to a user's input based in part on the degree of difficulty of a word input by a user. The support for this new claim in the specification at page 17, lines 15-20.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §112(2)

Claims 16 stands rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Although claim 16 is canceled, some features of that claim are now recited in claim 76, which recites, "an anticipating unit that anticipates a future response from the user if the word selected by the computer system be received and responded by the user." Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §101

Claim 58 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as being drawn to a "program per se." Applicants' newly presented claims no longer present the claims using this language and assert that the rejections are now moot. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

Art Rejections

All of the now canceled claims were rejected under either 35 U.S.C. §102(b) or 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as reciting features disclosed in the prior art. The primary references cited by the Examiner are JP 06269534 issued to Ishibashi and U.S. Patent 6,721,706 issued to Strubbe.

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Other cited references include Arnold, U.S. Patent 7,013,275, Waters, U.S. Patent 5,540,589, Wiggins, U.S. Patent 4,439,161, Stansvik, U.S. Patent 6,905,340, Toyoda, U.S. Patent 6,452,348, Kondo, U.S. Patent 6,449,591, and Yoshida, U.S. Patent 6,708,081.

Among other features present in exemplary embodiments of the invention, the current claims recited in combination, for example:

1. "selecting a wrong word in respect to the rules of the word chain game, the wrong word leading to termination of the word chain game due to breaking of one of the rules by the computer system;" (Claim 90; see other independent claims)
2. "outputting an incorrect word to result in a user's win in the word chain game." (Claim 90; see other independent claims)

Ishibashi discloses a computer game machine that reads the end of a word from a speech input so as to judge whether or not the end of the word is a predetermined letter. The machine chooses a word to output in which the beginning thereof matches the end of the word from the speech input, if a result of the judgment is that the end of the input word was not the predetermined letter.

Thus, Ishibashi fails to teach or suggest the two features described above. Strubble also fails to teach these features. Strubble discloses an interaction simulator configured to simulate an awareness of the user to generate an interaction that is more natural and appropriate than a prior art interaction simulator (see the Abstract). In the interaction simulator of Strubble, templates may be prioritized by a criteria going beyond simply goodness of fit to the words in user replies (col. 17, lines 7-8). Responses that have more content as well as responses that tend to encourage the user to continue talking can be used in some combination (col. 17, line 8-20). Further, the simulator of Strubble keeps track of the current subject of the discussion (col. 18, lines 5-9) and uses supervised or unsupervised learning (col. 18, lines 49-50). However, Strubble fail to teach or suggest the features recited in the claims above that are missing from Ishibahi.

Applicants assert that none of the other secondary references supply the features of the claim that missing from Ishibashi, and hence the Office Action fails to make out either a prima facie case of obviousness or anticipation. Applicants assert that the independent claims are allowable for at least this reason. The dependent claims not

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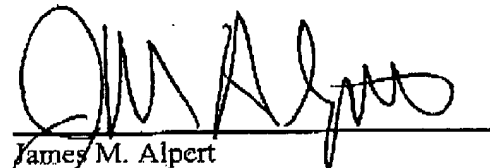
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specifically listed are further asserted to be allowable for at least their dependencies from the independent claims.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,


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